

B. S. Talk

(Barber Shoppers)
By DOUG McCLAY

CONTEST HUGE SUCCESS
These district contests really tax a man's barbershopability! A real long week-end starting last Friday night in Long Beach and lasting until early Monday morning. A week-end of singing, meetings, breakwasts, elimination singing, dinners, quartet clinics, rehearsals and more meetings. And of course the actual contest itself Saturday night. Brother!!! One wonders what makes men crowd so much into such a short time. Wear yourself out and then yell (or sing) for more.

But, as you look back, it isn't too hard to see that it's worth it. Every minute of it! There are fraternal orders without number in this world. But I doubt if there is any that exhibit that profound spark that is pure enthusiasm and comradeship to the degree that manifests itself in Barbershop singing. For one has to witness and be a part of this apparently mad scene to get more than an inkling of the intense feeling of goodfellowship and love of SINGING FOR FUN that is Barbershoping. For the uninitiated, I am referring to barbershop quartet harmony. Officially known as SPBSQA or the Society for the Preservation and Encouragement of Barber Shop Quartet Singing in America, Inc.

We have come to be known as the greatest musical society on earth and we have earned respect for our accomplishments in the greatest of the cultural arts, music. For this we are very proud. And the best part of it is that you don't have to be a musician! I would hazard a guess that fully 80 per cent of the society's membership nationally do not or did not read music when they joined. Naturally one picks up quite a bit of musical knowledge after a while. (If you like to sing in the bathtub, you will like to sing with us.) So don't get scared away by my high falutin' language. I just got carried away. . . . We still meet Thursday nights at the Bettie Thomas Studio at Crenshaw and Torrance Blvds.

The winners of the contest, by the way, were: The Sacramento Statesmen and the San Diego Serenaders. They will go to Detroit in June to compete in the international contest. That's what I said! INTERNATIONAL contest. The international organization has more than 600 chapters and more than 40,000 members! Boy-ee, it's gettin' big. Not bad for only 15 years of existence. And a great deal of this growth has taken place since the war.

BUT LISTEN TO THIS: The nearest contender to the above quartets was only ONE POINT BEHIND! Out of a possible 190 points, this was CLOSE! And the name of those poor crazy mixed-up kids that missed Detroit by one point is the "Travelers" from San Jose. Boy-ee, that was close. As someone quipped: "The proximity was terrific." However, being the alternates, they would be in line for Detroit if for some reason one of the other two could not go. . . . As for the other competing quartets, well, we hope our Deacons will know soon! 'Cause we want to know too!

The other highlight of the evening was of course the combined barbershop chorus of nearly 300 voices. If you don't think that many males can make a racket, well, you should have heard!

The house was a sellout, by the way. Some 3700 seats, I'm told. It would seem that a sellout is the order of the day these days. With barbershop harmony rapidly becoming a national pastime, anything is likely to happen. It's growth is little short of amazing.

Which brings us to next Saturday night, May 2. That is the night of the Torrance Chapter's open house. You're invited to bring your friends. About 8 o'clock at the Bettie Thomas Studio at Torrance and Crenshaw Blvds. Come and see! You'll like old fashioned barber shop harmony. It's for free so what can you lose? Well, except to mention that we are getting our display ready for the Hobby Show in May at the Civic Auditorium. So I guess that's "30" for today. See you Saturday.

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